

HUNTLEY & PALMERS - the first name you think of in BISCUITS

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MAR 5 1946

DETROIT

PUNCH



For conditions of sale and supply of Punch
see bottom of last page of text



Player's Please





The way
Liberty linings
are stitched
to the uppers
assures your
comfort, besides
preserving the
smart
Liberty shape

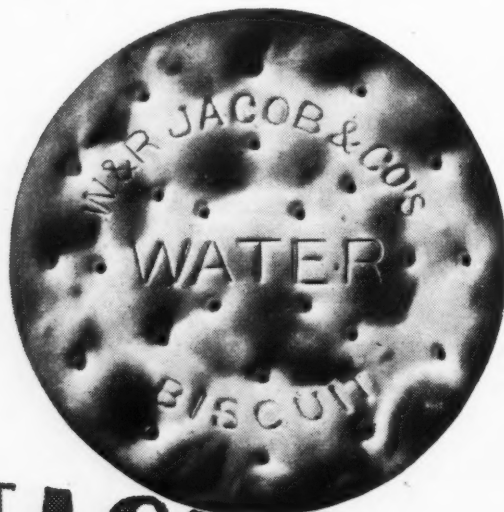
Walk with Liberty

The words "comfort" and "style" may be shoemaking clichés, but in Liberty Shoes they are mechanically assured facts, achieved by the genius of the cleverest designers in the industry. "Walk with Liberty" is a slogan, but in our factory it is a designing formula that is responsible for Liberty success.



LIBERTY SHOES Ltd., Leicester

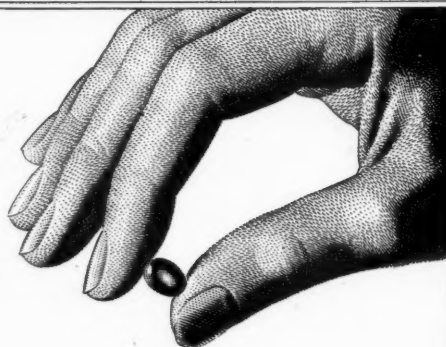
P2



JACOB'S

water biscuits

W. & R. JACOB & CO. (LIVERPOOL) LTD.



EXTRA VITAMINS ESSENTIAL TO HEALTH

COLDS and influenza cannot be resisted when your diet is deficient in vitamin A: the daily dose of Crookes' ensures you the necessary amount. Adults cannot keep healthy and children cannot grow up with straight bones and strong teeth without sufficient vitamin D: the daily dose of Crookes' keeps your supply well above the safety level. This extra supply of vitamins A and D will work wonders in building up your resistance and stamina.

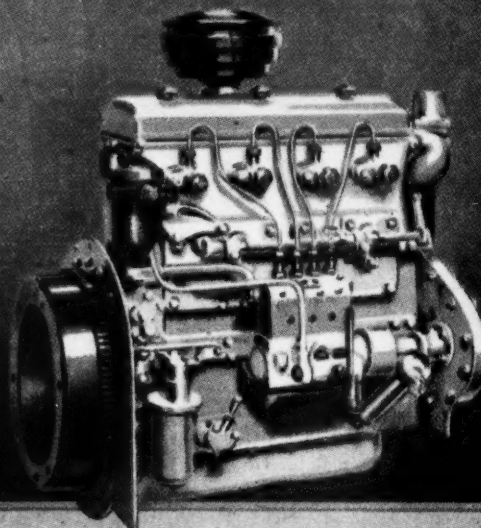
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OBTAINABLE ONLY FROM CHEMISTS

Capsules—100-8/6

Liquid—enough for 16 days 2/-

MADE BY COVENTRY CLIMAX



The Coventry Diesel engine, illustrated above, is the result of careful evolution, and is available for stationary purposes or for transport applications. It is light, compact and has many valuable features.

COVENTRY DIESEL ENGINES LTD., COVENTRY

**COVENTRY
DIESEL**

'SHOW ME THE WAY TO GO HOME'

BY BEETLE

The Waddon Concrete and Building Material Co. Ltd.,* has patented and invented an ingenious road spot for marking traffic lanes, pedestrian crossings, etc. It is a pure white shell moulded (by Streetly) in Beetle and filled with concrete. It is visible at night, non-staining, non-skid, requires no maintenance, and (believe it or not) carries the heaviest traffic. Supplies of B.I.P. products are still limited, but their unexpected uses are certainly not.



Wadcrete Works,
Stafford Road, Croydon.



BRITISH INDUSTRIAL PLASTICS, LTD.
1 Argyll Street, London, W.1



The letter Eta
(the Greek long e)
is known by engineers
as the **symbol**
for **Efficiency.**

The Philips emblem
is another **symbol**
for **efficiency.**



The world-wide
reputation of Philips
electrical products is based on the
utmost efficiency in design, construction
and performance.

PHILIPS

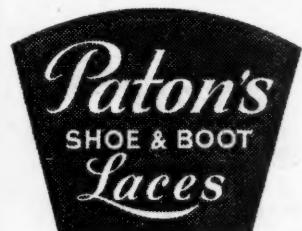
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AND ALLIED ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS

PHILIPS LAMPS LTD • CENTURY HOUSE • SHAFTESBURY AVE • W.C.2

(126K)



*All the wise of
all the races
Always ask for
Paton's Laces.*

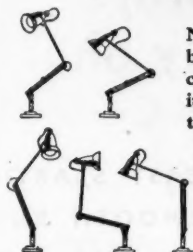


From your retailer

P.5

WM. PATON LTD. • JOHNSTONE • SCOTLAND

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Now let us relax in slippared ease . . . the wars
behind us, the future pleasantly vague. And to
cap the quiet hours, an ANGLEPOISE directing
its gentle glow exactly where we need it, at a finger
touch, on printed page or the evening's pastime.
So speed the day . . .

Sole Makers

Herbert Terry
& Sons Ltd.
Redditch.

The **TERRY**
ANGLEPOISE LAMP
(Pat. all countries.)

NOW IN SUPPLY IN LIMITED QUANTITIES

*Good cars
deserve*
LODGE
PLUGS



-others need them!

★THE PLUG WITH THE PINK
"SINTOX" INSULATOR

Lodge Plugs Ltd., Rugby



Don't
just say
Brandy.
say
R.G.B.

ROUYER, GUILLET BRANDY — OVER 140 YEARS' REPUTATION

The PERFECT SHAVE comes back
when the PERFECT RAZOR comes back.
No wonder thousands are waiting
for a ROLLS RAZOR.



ROLLS RAZOR
THE WORLD'S BEST SAFETY

Rolls
Razor Ltd.
London, S.W.1



If the better things
in life appeal to your sense
of good taste and you would
select a fine vermouth, choose
Vamour Vermouth . . . for
there is no **If** about it
. . . it is the Best you
can buy.

SWEET OR DRY

VERMOUTIERS (LONDON) LTD.,
25-28, BUCKINGHAM GATE, S.W. 1.



*It glides like a bird
on a looking-glass lake;
you should use a Swan pen
for your handwriting's sake*



**"In the present
state of medical
knowledge . . ."**

Exactly how exhausted nerves
are revitalized by the special
combination which is found only
in 'Sanatogen' Nerve Tonic has
never been fully explained; any
more than the ultimate 'why' of
Penicillin or of the Sulphona-
mides. The important thing is
that 'Sanatogen' does renew ex-
hausted vitality and soothe jangled
nerves. Ask for 'Sanatogen' Nerve
Tonic at your chemist's.

'SANATOGEN'
Regd. Trade Mark
NERVE TONIC

In one size only at present—
6/6d. (including Purchase Tax).
A 'GENATOSAN' Product.



All today's good
things are in
**C. Kunzle
Quality**
CHOCOLATES

Made by C. KUNZLE LTD., FIVE WAYS, BIRMINGHAM, 15

**You can
always
rely on...**

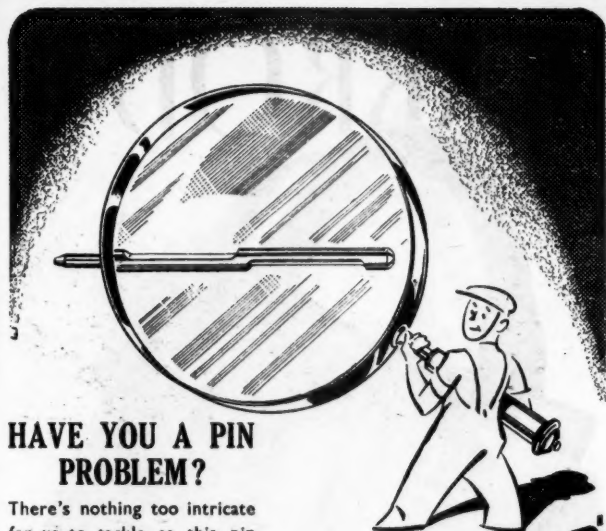
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MADE IN ENGLAND

- EASY STARTING
- SMOOTH RUNNING
- GREATER PETROL MILEAGE

A. C. SPHINX SPARKING PLUG CO., LTD. DUNSTABLE



HAVE YOU A PIN PROBLEM?

There's nothing too intricate for us to tackle as this pin illustrated shows:—

DIA. .090
Length 1.5
T.P.I. 63
Eccentricity .035
Eccentricity Radius .045
Eccentricity Length .5625

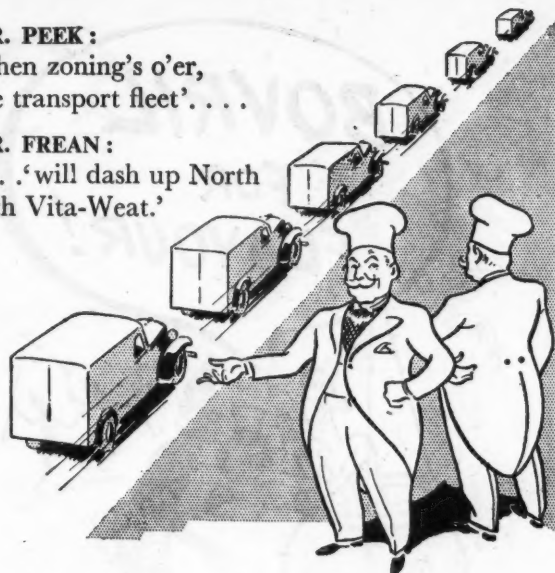
Think in 'STEAD' before you buy

Yet another accomplishment by
J. STEAD & CO. LTD. SHEFFIELD 2

Tele: Sheffield 22283 (4 lines)

MR. PEEK:
'When zoning's o'er,
the transport fleet'....

MR. FREAN:
.... 'will dash up North
with Vita-Weat.'



By Appointment
Peek Frean & Co. Ltd.
Biscuit & Vita-Weat
Crispbread Manufacturers

Vita-Weat

PEEK FREAN'S CRISPBREAD

Made by Peek Frean & Co. Ltd., makers of famous biscuits



And now—from war to peace, but men's choice of collar still remains—

"VAN HEUSEN"

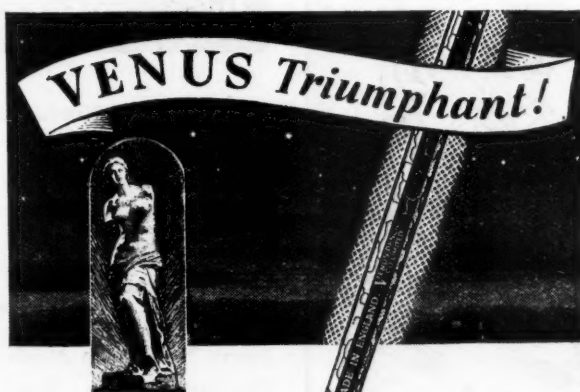
Amidst all the discomforts of Service life men clung to one real luxury—the "Van Heusen" non-shrinkable collar. Now when they come back to Civvy Street, they still insist on the collar of perfect style and comfort. Coupons, too, are a question which makes their choice indubitably "Van Heusen"!



"VAN HEUSEN"

SEMI-STIFF COLLARS

Sole Manufacturers: J. Harding, Tilton & Hartley, Ltd., Taunton, Somerset.



Venus looks down on a war-torn world turning at last to Peace and Reconstruction. We hope before long to be able to offer again the wide choice of quality pencils for which the Venus Pencil Co. are

famous the World over. Until that time, there are seven grades from which to choose under the standard name Venus 'War Drawing,' besides Blacklead Copying and Coloured Utility pencils.

VENUS

Still stands for Quality in PENCILS

THE VENUS PENCIL CO., LTD., LOWER CLAPTON ROAD, LONDON, E.3.

RATTRAY'S 7 RESERVE TOBACCO

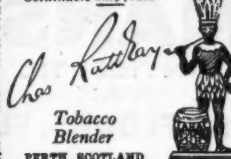
Many handsome letters of appreciation of Rattray's service have been received even during the war period. Some say thanks for prompt attention given—some praise the packings—all give unstinted thanks for the excellence of the tobacco and the pleasure they get from it. For Rattray's it is a great joy to know they have so many enthusiastic friends.

Acustomer writes from BRADFORD — "As confirmed pipe smokers, we think your tobacco absolutely first class."

Acustomer writes from PRESTWICK — "When one still finds a tobacco of pedigree existing in this country, its excellence is all the more noticeable."

Acustomer writes from WILMSLOW — "How very much I appreciate the excellent service which you continue to give in these difficult times."

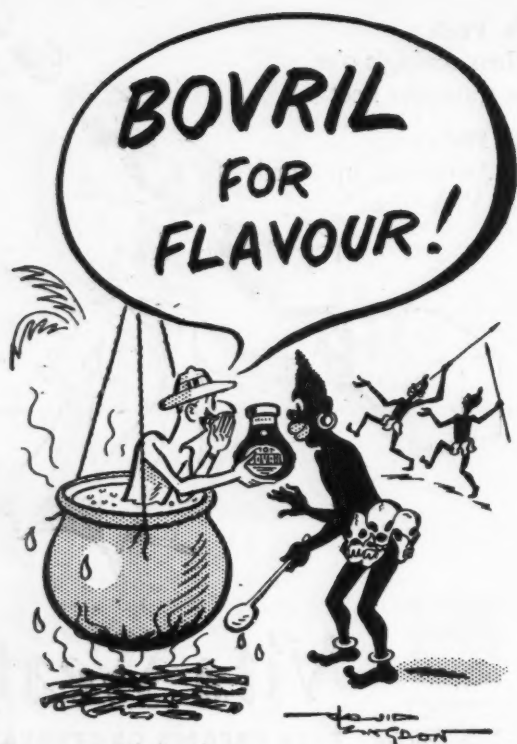
Obtainable only from



Tobacco
Blender

PERTH, SCOTLAND

Price 50/4 per lb., Post Paid.
Send 12/7 for sample 1-lb. tin, Post Free.



WHEREVER SOMETHING'S COOKING



"I say, Grandpa!—your slippers want mending. There's a big hole in that one. We can see it in the reflection in the 'Mansion' polished floor."

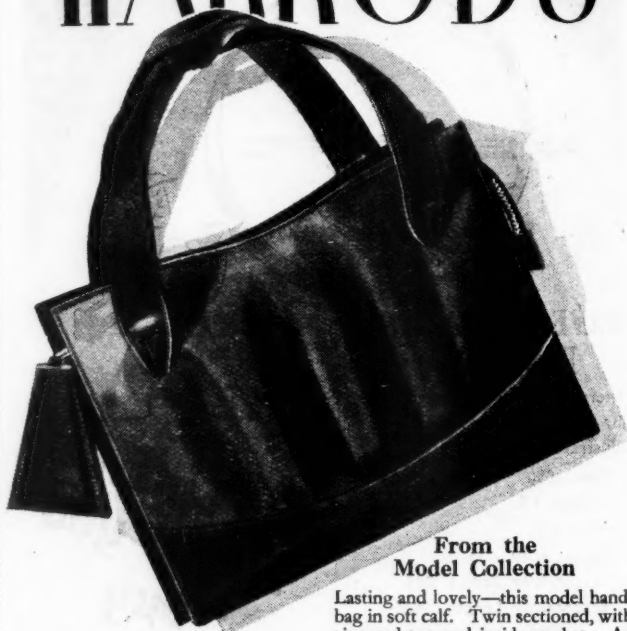
MANSION
ANTISEPTIC
WAX **POLISH**
FOR FLOORS, FURNITURE AND LINO

Use sparingly—still in short supply.

Chitwick Products Ltd., London, W.4.

MP/TA

HARRODS



From the
Model Collection

Lasting and lovely—this model hand-bag in soft calf. Twin sectioned, with zippered top and inside pocket. An additional pocket secretes a purse. Elegantly lined rayon faille and generously sized 12½x10 ins. Black, brown, navy. **£20.14.5**

HARRODS LTD

LONDON SW1

WHERE THERE'S NEED —

IN devastated Northern Norway the plight of the homeless throughout the long bitter winter has been pitiable indeed. Salvation Army Relief teams are at work in North Norway, in North Finland, North - West Europe and Holland. Relief work, already begun in the Far East

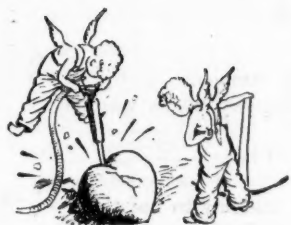
by Salvation Army Officers freed from Japanese internment camps, will soon be reinforced by workers from Britain and Australia.



The need is vast, beyond description—but your gift **WILL** mean help to some child, some man or woman. Please send it to-day to GENERAL CARPENTER, 101, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, E.C.4

THERE'S THE SALVATION ARMY!

Member society of the Council of British Societies for Relief Abroad.



PUNCH

Or

The London Charivari



Vol. CCX No. 5485

February 20 1946

Charivaria

THE world's greatest authority is to join a national newspaper. Or at least, he will be when he does.

A critic, condemning a new play, complains that, to make matters worse, the leading actress is inaudible. So ends her gallant but misguided attempt to shield the author.



"LACROSSE boots, size 7½ or 8; rugger boots, size 8; half a disarticulated skeleton."
Advt. in "West Kirby Advertiser."
Owner giving up?

Door-to-door canvassers are beginning to reappear. Several men suspected of being vacuum-cleaner salesmen have recently had their foot thrust in the door for them by eager housewives.

The old music-hall tune, "Let's All Go Down the Strand—Have a Banana," is being revived, we are told. Only those under eighteen of course will be allowed to sing it.

Read While Waiting

"PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN PAPER.
NO FISH."

Notice outside a Hove fishmonger's.

So mild has it been in the South lately that plumbers are reported to be queueing up for burst pipes.

To the intelligent observer one of the most striking features of Britain nowadays is the number of people queueing outside the cinemas for what they would sooner have dried egg than.

Which reminds us that a poultry-farmer in Essex says one of his August-hatched pullets has laid eight double-yolked eggs in thirteen days. There will be no holding Sir Ben Smith now.

A mysterious bird which nobody seems to recognize has been seen in several Surrey gardens. Can it be the Dove of Peace?

A columnist mentions that it is easy to recognize a man who has been for some years out of England. We noticed one quite recently running to catch a train.



"A case containing four bottles of deadly rugs . . ."
The sort Hitler chewed just before the end? *Evening paper.*

Massage is now given to gramophone music. A popular choice for corpulent clients is "Roll Out The Barrel."

A soldier-cyclist advertises for companions for a long tour of Britain on demobilization. Others will return to their wives and casually look around for houses.



In 1966?

THERE was an old, old Government Department
 In an old hotel,
 Long over-ripe, long rotten,
 And how it was begotten
 None could tell;
 From what chrysalis prison
 On butterfly wing
 Of what Ministry arisen
 One day in Spring,
 Whether it was 1939 or whether it was 1940,
 It made its first sortie
 A beautiful thing.
 Was it possibly the Ministry of Information
 Or Interior Co-ordination?
 Did it deal with Dead Fish or Waste Pulp Preservation
 Or Boots or String?
 But adown the long corridors the weariful minutes
 Would pass at whiles
 And a sound be heard like the sound of the wings of linnets
 In lake-locked isles,
 Brother to brother still passed to each other
 Those whispering files;
 And sometimes a messenger would pass from chamber to
 chamber,
 A white-haired man, bow-backed, with trembling knee,
 Bearing in his hand a tray and a pot of forever amber
 Tea,
 And a typist like a pale wraith sometimes would wander
 Into the room of one who seemed to ponder
 Momently:
 And now and again the noise of plaster peeling
 And dropping from the ceiling
 Shook the still air,

And about each dirt-rimmed casement
 And down in the Central Registry which was the
 basement
 The spider had woven its lair.
 And one passing by would say "It was surely better
 In the interests of national economy to unfetter
 This old, old Government Department
 And de-requisition it
 And re-recondition it
 And drive out the mice and the mildew and the
 bats,
 And save the poor taxpayer the intolerable burden
 Of paying the officers their ill-gotten guerdon,
 And turn the whole place into flats."
 So one would say;
 But another would answer him "Cease
 From disturbing this haunt of tranquillity and peace
 Much needed in our world of to-day,
 This dear immemorial shrine,
 This memory of a page that has passed into fathomless
 mystery
 But still is a portion and a parcel of our history,
 And has probably collected
 Statistics connected
 With making explosives out of twine
 Or turning bent pins into substitutes for butter"—
 So it stayed, undismayed,
 And sometimes a murmur would be heard and sometimes
 a mutter
 From behind a locked door, from behind a broken shutter,
 In the secret heart
 Of the old, old Government Department
 That would not depart.

EVOE.

Written in Anger

WHEN my train drew into the terminus thirty-six minutes late, hit the buffers a glancing blow and threw me on my back under the seat for the third time in ten days, I determined to lodge a protest.

"It won't do, porter," I said to an oldish man who opened my carriage door and peered in. "This sort of thing would not have been tolerated on the Stockton and Darlington Railway, and that's a hundred years ago."

He was looking, I think, for newspapers rather than passengers, but he helped me to my feet and brushed me down. "Driver over-ran it a bit," he explained.

"I know," I said. "Well, you must find some other way of stopping your trains. Fit brakes, if necessary. One doesn't complain when it happens during the rush-hours, because then of course the compartments are so tightly packed that nobody can fall over, but it is useless for you to ask me to stagger my journeys and relieve pressure by coming up a bit later if I am simply going to be thrown under the seat at the end of it. And look at the time. How can I consent to come up a bit later, when you and your fellow-directors combine to make me twice as late as the time I first thought of? Upon my soul,"

I said, warming up, "I would rather be crushed to death at a respectable hour than rolled in your abominable dust half-way through the morning. I am bound to be flattened out on the return journey in any case, and a man may as well crack his ribs, I suppose, going one way as the other. Do you know that yesterday evening when I tried to shift my newspaper which had somehow got wedged between my chin and the collar of a man in a bowler hat, eleven other people told me to keep still. They hadn't got to the end of the bits they were reading, you see. We filled up later on. Fourteen or fifteen of us had to get out temporarily at the first stop because of some ass who lived there wanting to push his way through from the far end of the carriage, and of course the crowd on the platform, seeing all that lot coming out, naturally made a dash for it. And equally naturally—if you are doing me the honour of attending to what I am saying—equally naturally the people who had got out simply to oblige this other chap didn't want to get left behind, so there was a great deal of misunderstanding and unmannerly pushing. We got them all in eventually, including the man who had wanted to get out, but it was a near thing. I only mention



REUNION DINNER



"Getting on fine now. I've managed to get several of my chaps back from the ordnance factory."

this, porter, because some of you fellows at headquarters may be rather out of touch with what is going on down the line. You mouch about here, whistling your trains out forty minutes late, putting up wrong platform numbers on the indicator board, and periodically straightening your buffers, without a thought for the tattered wrecks who limp away nightly from your suburban stations. And look at my hat. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

He didn't seem to be. I very much doubt if he cared at all. "The reasons," he said, "why the Company is unable to offer its usual 'igh standard of service is fully set out on posters 'ung up or otherwise displayed on the Company's premises."

"Exactly," I said. "Inferior coal. Shortage of ticket-inspectors. Not enough wheels to go round. What is all this to me? You don't reduce your charges, I notice. It doesn't occur to you that you are packing three times as many passengers into a train as you are providing accommodation for and calmly expecting them to pay as if some arrangements had been made for them to travel. My hat!" I cried, "there is enough fuss if some poor taxi-driver crams half a dozen extra people into his cab and tries to charge them all the full fare. But what do you care? Let 'em pay up and look pleasant, you say."

When I had said this I stumped off without another word. After all, it wasn't perhaps the porter's fault. But when I got to the little restaurant I run somewhere off

Shaftesbury Avenue I took up my pen and wrote out the following notice to my customers:

If you find the Soup Cold, the Service Deplorable and Tea-leaves in the Shepherd's Pie again—
REMEMBER that the Management is handicapped by
Old and Inefficient Waiters
Cook gone off in a huff owing to Shortage of
Pepper
Bird's Nest in Kitchen Chimney and insufficient
Sweeps to remove same
Inferior gas
Saucepans almost worn out

The Management is confident that patrons will continue to eat what is put, or slapped down, in front of them, in a spirit of uncomplaining loyalty.
Prices as Usual.

When I had hung this notice up, or otherwise displayed it on my premises, and raised the price of Shepherd's Pie to 1/9d., I was ready to serve the public for another day. "Let them come in," I said to my head waiter. "Turn no one away. Seat them sixteen or twenty at a table, if need be."

But need wasn't.

H. F. E.

Le Sport

A FRIEND of mine, having recently returned to the Continent after six years of exile in this country, has presented me with a knotty problem. He wrote that he had resumed his profession of teaching at a boys' school and as his subjects included both English and games he wanted to combine the two by instructing his pupils in an essentially English game whose phraseology might furnish them with class-room matter just as its technique would have to be tackled on the playing-field. Could I suggest a game other than cricket or rugby? as the former was certain to be opposed by those board members currying favour with the old Carpatho-Roumanian bloc, while the introduction of the latter was not deemed advisable until the size of the national post-war Army had been decided either by referendum, plebiscite or ballot. And if I could suggest such a game, would I let him have a description to "whet the appetite of the Board of Directors."

It did not take me long to decide on what in retrospect seems the only choice—the old public-school game of Plunking the Drayt. By a fortunate coincidence I came across the description of just such a game of Plunking the Drayt played last term between two of our most cherished schools, as reported by that admirable journal *The T-m-s*.

Here is the cutting I sent him:

"PLUNKING THE DRAYT AT BELHAM
Mr. Bullheifer's XVII

Plunking the Drayt has made a welcome reappearance at Belham this year and there were many enthusiasts and Old Bees to witness the resumption of a tradition which, it is believed, goes as far back as Dominic the Clovryer.

To the great satisfaction of spectators and players alike the day promised to be fine. It was more: it was a perfect day, the driest November 13th since 1897, although, by a curious coincidence, it was also the wettest November 13th since 1902.

The spectators had soon positioned themselves at vantage points, and, as in former years, the sheer 200-foot-drop known as 'players' delight' drew an expectant crowd, among whom the famous mauve and green motif abounded.

The game opened briskly with Dobbin's trying a long baulk to Twart only to be pimmied at Short Bulver. Cries of 'crogan, crogan' were heard,

but a plumpurte was rightly disallowed.

Quailham's outsides began a dangerous movement down the centre, and at one moment little West looked like drubbing, but he was pimmied by a very reliable Dobbin's cutter. In fact, to borrow the language of another game, Dobbin's cutters were 'arkling' with great skill.

For some time it appeared as though neither side was likely to drub, but once again it was little West who proved that

'... no prize too glittering,
no step too bold ...'

when he quarmeled down past Twart and plunked with perfect ease for a drayt and a half. *Bis dat qui cito dat*.

Quailham's continued to press very hard, and Dobbin's soon found themselves off the main pitch, forced up the narrow staircase and finally into the master's bedroom, where the usual overcle was declared.

A pleasant half-hour's journey in the school bus, now happily restored to use, brought the players back to the starting-point.

The third half proved less eventful, partly because of the failing light, partly because of the condition of the ground.

A clever move by Walters (Dobbin's) came to nothing, and he was unfortunately lost over the cliff. Had he

remembered to trangle in time he might have saved the game and drayt. *De mortuis ...*

Even so Dobbin's made one gallant puller after the other which several times brought them within an inch of drubbing. An excellent chance was missed when Cleaver delayed his trorque for a fraction of a second and had to blugg from an impossible angle.

Cleaver's exploit (he is a very useful player) reminded me of just such an occasion in 1882 when I, no longer a very young man, had watched the unforgettable Flagg attempt the same trorque and—fail. The scene is very vivid in my mind, but then, in those days, the tunts were always billed, and, who can say, perhaps even a little smoked.

*Ah, que je fusse mort,
Ou bien que je ne le fusse pas ...*

This was palpably Dobbin's half, and their clogging was excellent.

The final score: Quailham's 0.1738, Dobbin's 0.01

Analysis:

| | | | |
|---------|---------|----------|--------|
| West | : 4 bwk | 0.3 exc. | blugg. |
| Boyle | : — | noggin 3 | (!) |
| Cleaver | : 1 bwk | ha, ha | (!!) |

(This is a house record)

Walters: No score. +

Mr. Bullheifer's XVII did not play."

I am now awaiting my friend's reply.



"They haven't found Hitler's
body lately."

To My Wood Merchant

WHEN first upon my hearth to blaze
Your precious trees were slain,
Though sore perplexed in sundry ways
I did not once complain.

I bore it as a brave man should,
Nor clamoured to be told
Why such a common thing as wood
Should bear the price of gold,

Nor why it had to smell so strong
And breathe so foul a smoke,
Nor why you left it out so long
(Like frying-pans) to soak.

But now a fault more irksome yet
Forbids me to be dumb:
Malodorous, expensive, wet—
It doesn't even come. M. H. L.

Old Stalwart

ACCORDING to the *Slaybeck Intelligence*, which I have just received by post, Amos Melling was ninety-three last week. Well, it is a greater age than it looks, up on the fells where there are times when the zephyrs are like sandpaper. The reporter said that the old man's memory was good, that he still liked his pipe of tobacco and to play a little on the harmonium. I wonder if he has lost his unorthodoxy? That used to be a quality of his. I know. Amos used to teach me in Sunday school.

He took the boys' class. Occasionally he acted as superintendent, especially in the morning session when the weather was particularly bleak and no other teacher attended. At the time he was a stone trimmer up at Gourley's Quarry. His physique was easily adequate to the task. I still think on occasions of his exposition on Samson and the lion. It was his favourite lesson. First of all he dragged one of the squat, oak bible-boxes to the centre of the room and securely fastened the lid to prevent the bibles falling out as he made his various points. After a few preliminaries he picked up the box and told us that that was how Samson took hold of the lion. Since he now clutched his substitute lion breast-high, all we could see of him was a pair of slightly bowed legs and his chin resting on top of the box. Here he usually interpolated a remark outside the bare story, perhaps to advise us that Samson had a far greater task than himself, because in his case the lion was struggling. He then slewed the box round until it rested on his left hip. Holding it there with his left hand, he put his right behind his neck and slowly extended it until he was able to grip the box handle. Although he never actually disjoined himself, even at that early age I used to fear for him, since next, by a slow contortive movement, he drew up the box behind him until it rested on his shoulders. What a scene it was in that old schoolroom, with the drab putty-coloured furnishings unrelieved except for the almost phosphorescent purple of our teacher's face. As he stood there, looking rather like Atlas with the world upon his shoulders, he explained that in that fashion did Samson render the lion limp enough to be tackled with an ass's jawbone. Finally, he brought the box down to the floor and, having instructed the best boy reader to utter the prayers and the rest the responses,

he took us twice through the Litany and then dismissed us.

Another lesson he was fond of inculcating was the puniness of physical strength as opposed to spiritual. Physical strength withereth as the grass, was the crux of his opening. Physical strength was an accident, spiritual strength was acquired. He would then tell us that he proposed illustrating how he almost lost when he wrestled the Shap Shipwright for the championship, catch-as-catch-can style. He lay flat on his back, except that his shoulders were hoisted an inch from the floor. He invited the class to try to close the gap. Except for one member, who was chosen as referee, we all piled on top of him. We tried hard, and some boys backed away and jumped on to the heap, but we failed to force down his shoulders. At last, when our failure was obvious, the teacher got on his feet and informed us that if we could imagine strength ten million times more powerful than his, that was spiritual strength. Several boys I knew sent up for dumb-bells.

Ninety-three! And to think that I had almost forgotten him. Despite his idiosyncrasies he was of the type that kept the buckram in the Sunday-school movement. They came up from the coal-pits, away from the blast-furnaces, out of the cotton-mills, and they taught according to their lights. They were always dependable, calamity alone would have caused them to be absent or late. Amos Melling was representative. He was virtually illiterate, indeed he read music better than prose. But he never let anyone down. I am reminded of the coldest morning I remember in my life. I would not have gone to Sunday school but for being within three weeks of landing a red-leather prayer-book for a year's full attendance. As it was, in addition to other extra clothing I wore two pairs of stockings and had my hands in my mother's second-best muff. It was barely light. The snow that had fallen on the previous day was as hard as stone. Beyond the Pennines a sky the hue of lead showed that there was more to come. Only fifteen of us attended. Amos Melling, who had lit the furnace for the caretaker at 6 A.M., was the only teacher there. But the cold defied the warm pipes. Amos did his best. He announced that he personally was aglow, although, after breaking the ice on the tarn two hours earlier, his swim had been inconvenienced by

the attacks of three hungry swans. He called upon the boy reader to proceed with the first Lesson for the day. He then ran us round the room three times. The boy read the Collect. Amos told us to flap our arms across our chests. But even he was forced to terminate prematurely. He sat down at the harmonium and flicked a few pages of the music book for the closing hymn. He peered at the numerals for a moment and then announced hymn 13. Steam came with every breath as we proceeded. It was difficult to read the words, for we sang virtually in cock-light, our treble voices in unison:

"As now the sun's declining rays
At eventide descend . . ."

Things Alone

I

A void said to a vacuum
"Cogito ergo sum."
The vacuum stood up and winced,
and left the place it had not filled,
completely unconvinced.

II

In a big building lived a lift
which thought "I'll cut myself adrift,"
and so it did. While crashing to the
ground
it said "At last it will be found
that it is hardly up to me
to fight the law of gravity."

III

Once an effect said "It's against the
laws
that I exist without a cause.
Nobody therefore will suspect
that I am only the effect."

IV

Once a right angle said
"It's difficult to live along-
side other angles which are wrong.
How often in my time I've tried
to tell them only I am right.
But every time they answer me,
'You take yourself too literally.'"

V

A joke said "What I'm after
is laughter."
I said "That's what you are before."
The joke itself was seen no more.

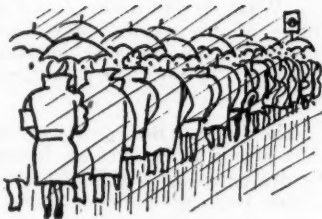
"LORD HALIFAX
ON LOAN TO BRITAIN"
"The Times."

Have Congress agreed?

LONDON CRY



"Darling, would you—



be an angel—



and just—



nip up—



to—



Oxford Street—



for five minutes—



and—



get me—



a threepenny packet—



of those little—



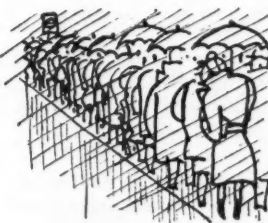
bronze hairpins.



I'd order them—



direct—



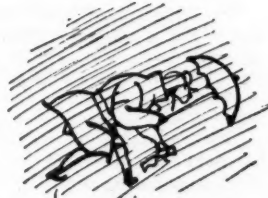
only that—



it's—



so VERY much—



easier—



for someone—



on the spot !!!"



"Coughs and colds on top."

Table-Talk of Amos Intolerable

XXIV

IT happened that one wet night a mild-looking rather watery-eyed man with a hanging white forelock had unwarily chosen to sit in Amos's favourite chair. As Amos burst in, shaking his hat, this man was in the middle of a narrative of some war-time journey of his and was just saying "And I was free to talk to anyone I pleased."

Amos shuffled up to him—so far as I know they had never met before—and bent down to make the apparently unprovoked comment "Never said a word the whole time, eh?"

He once described a character in a story he was telling as "the sort of small, plump, elegant woman who tends to wear a rudimentary top-hat."

"Hey!" ejaculated someone with a memory. "I thought you disapproved of that phrase?"

"What phrase?"

"The sort of . . . who."

"Certainly I do," said Amos. "So what?"

"Well, damn it all," said the other. "There you go using it yourself. After all the fuss you make when anybody else talks about types—you said types made you sick—well, I mean—"

"Look," said Amos. "Do you deny there are types?"

"Why, of course I don't," said the objector resentfully. He was a slight, very dark man with large eyes and a blue chin, and he had a habit of puffing out cigarette-smoke as if exasperated even in moments of repose; now, with some

excuse for exasperation, he looked absolutely savage. One or two of the others began to back him up, and somebody said "Yes, Amos, look here, you can't have it both ways."

"What do you mean?" said Amos, becoming more and more affable as the opposition increased, and at last presenting quite a good imitation of a man with a sunny temper. "I have had it both ways, haven't I?"

The Private Bar, as I have said before, is very small; but people in it can see, because of the peculiarly concentrated design of this little pub, nearly everybody in the Public Bar, the counter of which is at right angles. Occasionally a drinker in the Public Bar will feel disposed to take part in a conversation going on in the more expensive neighbourhood next door.

Recently a man in a blue overall coat raised a gloomy head—he looked something like a very glum version of one of the later portraits of Phil May—and called across from the Public Bar to Amos, who was at the counter getting a drink: "I been cleaning a brass plate."

"You have?" said Amos as he picked up his change.

"Yus, I have!" said the man, becoming a bit more lively. He raised his left hand above the bar and showed that he held a rag in it. "You want to get to know 'ow the other 'alf lives! You and your sevenpence-a'penny beer," he added scornfully.

As it happened Amos was buying a gin. He hid it with his hand as he lifted it back to the table and said quite amiably "What is there about cleaning a brass plate?"

"It's an art," said the man darkly.

"Well, I realize that," said Amos. He was now sitting down again and the man could see only his head. Amos went on talking about something—probably the ancient Roman emperors—but the brass-polisher had not finished. He said very positively "You don't grasp what an art it is, you don't," and struggled along to the partition across the bar and put his head round it, only momentarily surprised to find that an airman and his girl were standing close up against the other side.

"There's fine points—" he began loudly, and broke off to say to the girl, "Oh, excuse me, miss—there's fine points," he resumed sternly to Amos, "that would amaze you. Strike you dumb, they would."

Unfortunately this last remark roused laughter from some of the rest of us. The man did not realize that it was incredulous laughter and became no less annoyed than Amos, who did.

"So!" he suddenly yelled. "Laugh at the finer instincts of a working man, would you! Jeer at the soul of an artist! I'd like to see you polish a brass plate!"

"That's right," said Amos complacently, looking down at his drink. "Never done a hand's turn at a brass plate, any of you."

"And what about you?" said the man nastily, twisting his head further round the partition. "You! You with the moustache. What about you?"

The atmosphere quietened down after a few minutes, but, "For a moment there," Amos observed when it was possible to do so without attracting unfavourable notice, "I got an inkling of what Kerensky felt like in 1917."

"She sets out on it," said Amos once, referring to the barmaid's approach to the quartering of a sandwich, "with the loins-girding air of a lexicographer about to sum up in a sentence the precise grammatical and emotional implications of the phrase 'not but what'." R. M.

The Polish Soldier

HE'D stopped me on the outskirts of a little market town in West Shropshire. In the direction in which he was going the next town was twenty miles away, with nothing in between but a main trunk road and a few scattered hamlets, in addition of course to the inevitable country inns.

"Scuse plees," he said, bowed, and added what sounded like "Fladimeer Potsnarn." It had me beaten so I said "Eh?" "Fladimeer Potsnarn," he repeated, bowed again, and touched his breast with his forefinger.

"Oh," said I. "I see. You're Fladimeer Potsnarn. I'm Philip Smith," and I put out my hand, which he shook violently for a long time. We were both very pleased that we'd been so clever. "Fladimeer Potsnarn, me," he said, "and you Fleep Smit. Hock eye."

"Hock eye?" said I. "What's hock eye?"

"Hock eye, yes," he replied. "Ol raight. American. Hock eye."

"You mean O.K.?" I asked. "Yes," said he. "Hock eye."

I said it was certainly O.K. as far as I was concerned, and we walked along together. "If you're going to Salop you'll get a lift all right," I remarked. "Plees?" said he, and I repeated it more slowly and much more loudly, but he didn't make anything of it, and could only answer "Sorry. Plees." Then I thought I'd try him with what Latin I could remember, so I said "Ambulans ad Salopiam?"

"Not," he answered vigorously. "Not ambulance. Veree feet," and to prove it proceeded to do "knees bend, arms extend" on the edge of the road. Either Poles don't learn Latin at school or I'd forgotten more than I thought. I know some score words in continental tongues, but sorting them out proved at once that about twelve of them were no use in this emergency. However, it was worth trying, so waving my arms in the direction of Salop I said "Travailler?" "Not," said he. Then I turned in the direction from which he came and repeated my *lingua franca*. It clicked. He grinned, and "Hock eye," he said. "Shestaire." I was as proud as a man who has done *The Times* crossword in ten minutes. Again we shook hands and I summed up.

"I see. You're stationed at Chester," but "Not," replied he.

"Not," said I ruefully. "Then where are you billeted?"

"Shestaire," he answered. "Not at Station. Billits."

"Splendid," said I. "You're billeted in the town at Chester."

"Wunderbar," he shouted. "Merveilleuse," and smacked me on the back. He knew odd words in many languages, and sometimes I knew the same odd word in that language as he did, so we got on marvellously, especially as I gathered that he loved talking to the English, who were a marvellous people. As an Englishman, that pleased but didn't altogether surprise me.

I was still puzzled to know why he'd chosen this rather dull little town so far away from Chester for his outing, but couldn't find a way of getting at it. I'd said "Business? Pleasure? Relations?" but none of them had clicked, though I accompanied them with interrogatory eye-brows and a finger pointing to the town. Then I had a brain wave. I tapped him impressively on the chest and made him understand that an important observation was on the way, and he concentrated visibly.

First I said "Chester" firmly, and he said "Hock eye" with enthusiasm. Next I puffed like a train, imitated a

man walking briskly, the bell of a tram, and finally galloping horses. "Shestaire Races," said my Pole. "Hock eye. Like Shestaire Races," and I said "O.K."

Then I tapped him on the chest to engage his most acute attention. Having got it so that it made him glow, I puffed like a train, first saying "Chester," and then swung my arm in a wide arc towards the little town behind us. I repeated this three times, and at the end raised eye-brows and swung out arms as I registered complete bewilderment, coupled with what I hoped was an obvious request for enlightenment.

He applauded as would an enthusiastic audience a favourite actor.

"Hock eye. Hock eye," he shouted. "Shestaire. Here. Visiting-girl friend," and we embraced with enthusiasm.

A Lullaby in Poor Taste

(To be sung in Westminster.)

HUSHABYE, baby, a hush to your crying,
See how the gay little flags are a-flying.

Sleep without fear in your blanket of fleece,
Lullaby Java, rockaway Greece.

Doze in your blue-ribboned nest of inertia,
Pop go the Poles and pat-a-cake Persia.

Run to your dreams where the little lambs play,
Mr. Vishinsky has come for the day,

And nothing can harm you, oh infant most blest,
Ride-a-cock Palestine, peep-bo Trieste.

Lully, my darling, till atom bombs fall,
When up will go baby and Mummy and all. V. G.





"Well, what did the old skinflint say when you asked him for a rise?"

Ballade of a Scandalized Incomprehension

[Extract from Daily Orders of a B.A.O.R. unit: "The following establishment is out of bounds to all ranks—The Café Colibri."]

ON V E-night—my comrades will endorse—
We found a café, welcoming though small.
At midnight, showing praiseworthy resource,
We turned the bar into a music-hall.
By next day's noon the fun inclined to pall,
But still the band made stimulating sounds.
To-day this news has thrown me in a
stall:
The Café Colibri is out of bounds.

And was this café even then the source
Of mischief? Did the Redcaps make a haul
Of renegades? Were harpies there in force?
Or was there just no price-list on the wall?
Or was it jet propellant in those tall
Thin glasses which we drained in endless rounds?

We did not dream such ruin could befall:
The Café Colibri is out of bounds.

I don't forget the *châtelaines* of course:
Babette, that gaily indolent Bacall,
Who wore the flashes of Fort Louis Horse;
And Jeanne—no Cinderella at the ball;
But they were not the type to filch one's all
Then slide one through the trap-door. On what
grounds
Have these offended? None, I think. Withal,
The Café Colibri is out of bounds.

Prince, understand me. This is not a call
To throw the Provost-Marshal to the hounds,
But please do something, for the love of Gaul.
The Café Colibri is out of bounds.



THE SECOND TONIC

"This ought to make you feel better, but for heaven's sake don't swallow it now."

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Monday, February 11th.—House of Commons: National Insurance—Agreed.

Tuesday, February 12th.—House of Commons: Repeal, Reprisal, Recrimination.

Wednesday, February 13th.—House of Commons: More of Tuesday's Mixture.

Thursday, February 14th.—House of Commons: Food—for Body and Thought.

Monday, February 11th.—To-day was the calm before the storm. And it was certainly *some* calm—however the well-advertised storm may turn out later in the week. Government and Opposition continued the amiable process of telling each other how pleased they were that the National Insurance Bill was on its way to the Statute Book. The fact that both claimed parenthood of the promising infant was beside the point.

In due time the Bill was put to the House for Second Reading. Everyone had expected unanimity—but seemingly calms, as well as storms, have “orphans.” Sir WALDRON SMITHERS and Sir WILLIAM DARLING, both Conservatives, opposed the Second Reading, and were made by Mr. Speaker to stand up—thus indicating their lonely dissent—so as not to waste the time of the House in holding a division. Otherwise the House was unanimous.

Tuesday, February 12th.—“The Storm, Take 1,” as the film people say, was due to-day. But, truth to tell, the House looked normal and not very excited. But soft! Mr. Attorney-General, Sir HARTLEY SHAWCROSS, is seen to be wearing a tie of startling redness, and a voluminous breast-pocket handkerchief to match. It goes strangely with his otherwise traditional lawyer's “uniform.”

For Sir HARTLEY is due to move the Second Reading of the Bill to repeal the Trade Disputes Act, passed in 1927, after the general strike of 1926. From the fervency at the hustings of the advocates of repeal, it would appear likely that all would rise solemnly and stand with bowed heads while the Bill was moved.

But no, the House looks normal—except for that tie and that hanky. Sir HARTLEY stood up, arranged the tie, pulled the handkerchief out a little more, until it appeared like a crimson cascade down his immaculate jacket, and began.

Mr. Attorney has a perfect style, an attractive manner, a gift of logical presentation of a case. He is also, as

a rule, the soul of courtesy. But to-day he gave that last virtue a brief holiday and permitted himself to be rude to a Conservative who asked a question. Sensing that this was resented on his own side of the House as well as on the other, Sir HARTLEY plunged into the swirling depths of stormy politics.

It sounded strange to hear, coming from the lips of the unemotional and coldly logical leader of the British Bar, phrases like: “The 1927 Act has been a running sore debilitating the body politic”; “A grotesque travesty of the facts”; and “An iniquitous piece of class legislation.”

But they got cheers—so perhaps they were all right after all.



MAKING MINCEMEAT

The Attorney-General

The Attorney-General appeared to argue that neither the 1927 Act nor the repeal would make any difference to the law, and that, anyway, a law that was likely to be broken by many people was not worth keeping on the Statute Book.

(Mr. QUINTIN HOGG, replying later in the debate, remarked that this was a curious doctrine, and that most laws—including that against high treason—were broken from time to time, without any suggestion arising that they should therefore be repealed.)

A general strike, said Sir HARTLEY, was, and would remain, illegal. So would intimidation of non-strikers by strikers. In fact everything that was illegal before 1927 would still be illegal.

Mr. ANTHONY EDEN, leading the Opposition, seemed puzzled at this, and asked why all the excitement, all the martial music, all the parading of the Governmental forces, all the stentorian orders, if the only *effective* order was “As-you-were!”

If the general strike and all the other things were to remain illegal, he asked, why not say so in the Bill? A good many Members asked the same question, and were told at the end of the debate, by breezy Mr. GEORGE ISAACS, the Minister of Labour, that it did not matter what was put in Bills, because there would always be strikes if people felt like calling them. The Minister's argument was that an occasional strike was good for the body politic—which was presumably in need of a little reinvigoration after suffering the sore Sir HARTLEY had mentioned.

But Mr. ISAACS scored one point very wittily—with Mr. EDEN as the victim. He recalled Mr. EDEN's resignation from the Government, years ago, and argued that this was a strike with the object of coercing the Government. And Lord CRANBORNE, who resigned with him, had been guilty of a “sympathetic strike.” This nearly stopped the show, and Mr. EDEN led the applause.

Mr. HOGG, who wound up the debate for the Opposition, was so fascinated by the Attorney's red tie that it almost dominated his speech. At one point he professed to see “swastikas” sprouting from it. As for the Bill, well, that was a piece of childish political tit-for-tat, with some nineteen years between the tit and the tat.

The House was by then in risible mood, and when Mr. HOGG remarked that “there was much more he could say,” there were ironical cheers. Whereupon Mr. HOGG threatened that if he were again interrupted he *would* say it all. The threat was enough, and silence reigned.

Wednesday, February 13th.—Question time was a “riot” to-day, in the theatrical and (very nearly) the legal sense. For some unknown reason everybody seemed to be at everybody else's throat, and there was almost continuous uproar, which even Mr. Speaker's firm and humorous handling did not entirely quell.

Most of it, however, was good-tempered—if a trifle juvenile. But it fell to Major BRUCE, a newcomer to the House, to turn the whole thing sour and to raise real anger.

He asked a question which was taken to imply that Conservative Members had some financial interest in Sarawak, which would account for their numerous inquiries about the



"No, my son, I'm afraid you can't—it's for export only."

recent arrangement between the British Government and the Rajah.

There was uproar. There were demands, in a storm, for withdrawal of the offensive remark. Major BRUCE was briskly ordered by the Speaker to withdraw his remark, which he did. After quite a lot more shouting and cheering, including a heart-rending cry from MR. GALLACHER, "Look at some of the things they have said about me!" Mr. Speaker commented with some justification, "If we go on like this, we shall become quite an excited House."

And so to the debate on the Trade Disputes Bill once more. Sir JOHN ANDERSON, whose oratory is not of the kind that stirs the more elemental passions, opened, and was followed by Mr. ERNEST BEVIN, the Foreign Secretary. It was all quite interesting, but not very new, and the debate drifted into legal technicalities which passed the time quite pleasantly (for the lawyers, at any rate) until the division at the end of the evening.

When the time came to divide on the Bill, excitement had mounted sky high, and it showed itself in the recognized manner—cheers and singing.

Many of the singers chose the "Red Flag," and several of them appeared to know both words and music.

The result of the division was never in any serious doubt, but there were more cheers and a lot of paper-waving when the tellers announced the figures: For the Bill, 369; against, 194.

Thursday, February 14th.—Sir BEN SMITH, the Minister of Food, was the Hero of to-day's debate. Well, the precise rôle is perhaps open to doubt—it may have been that of the Villain. But, whatever it was, he played it well. He arrived armed with a bulging dispatch-case, and from it produced a sheaf of notes typed on blue paper. From this he proceeded to read his reply to a devastating series of questions aimed at him by Mr. EDEN, leading the Opposition.

This seemed to show almost psychic foresight—but most of the questions were those which had been on the lips of every housewife in the land, so perhaps it was merely a good Press-cuttings service, after all.

Mr. EDEN asked his questions with his usual courtesy, but with a persistence and point that clearly worried

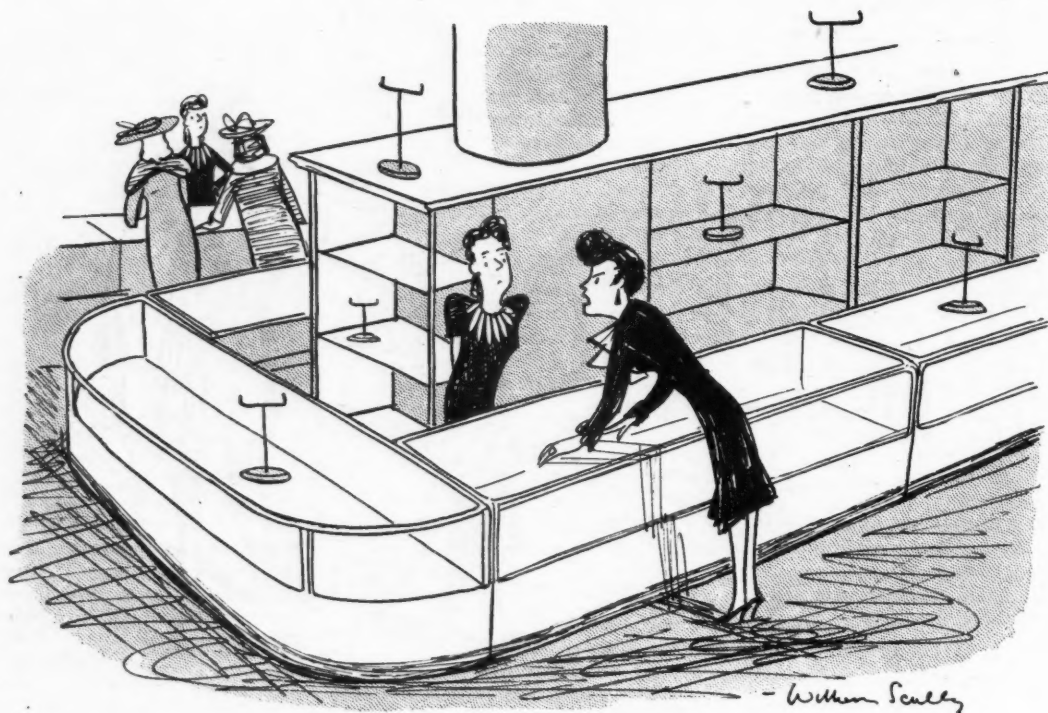
the Government and kept the crowded benches listening intently. Chief of them—it came as a refrain throughout his speech—was: "Why did not the Government tell the House and the country *earlier* of the difficult world situation?"

Sir BEN never fully explained this point. He read long extracts from speeches of other Ministers and claimed that anyone "who cared to inquire" could have extracted the gloomiest tidings from those speeches.

And he went on to paint as gloomy a picture as any presented to the House for many a year.

Then various Members, on both sides of the House, proceeded to add darker touches (some of a highly impressionistic character, let us hope) to the picture, until there were few bright pieces left showing.

It all seemed to come to this: The British people, once more, will have to tighten their belts and make do and mend, and "take it" for some time longer yet. But there was unanimity in the belief that the people who could perform the Miracle of Dunkirk would think little or nothing of the Miracle of Dollar-shortage.



"Mr. Baxter is coming round—for goodness' sake try to look busy."

Topsy Turvy

XIX

TRIX darling it's *too* likely that *this* despatch will read like the ravings of a sick bat or the dribbling of wolves in the Soviet forests, because the fact is I've got the most insanitary and stupefying cold, which of course is *so* deflating, because last autumn for *weeks* I had those fallacious injections, now I've taken Nazrine and Noblo and Eumucia and Antitarrh, which Haddock says is the most odious violation of language yet, in spite of which I'm still a mere perambulating sneeze, *all* my hankies and most of Haddock's are a *swamp*, and the washing these days comes back *half-yearly*, and of course if only all those *obscene* professors would stop mutilating the atom and do a *drive* against the cosmic cold, by the way darling you know what a *trend* I have for being right and you *may* remember what I told you *seasons* ago about their doing radar to the *Moon* and the

British *Plan* for an expedition and everything, because you were *too* incredulous and septical at the time, but now the first part has been released *official*, about the radar I mean, so who knows about the *rest*, not yet of course because the first result would be a scene in the *Security Circus* and as a matter of fact though don't *whisper* about this they *rather* think *Kamschatka* may have got wind already and raise the whole question of planetary spheres of influence *quite* soon, anyhow darling do try not to sniff *too* loudly at our humble efforts to enlighten and *prepare* you, which reminds me *years* ago deny it or not the *moment* you were redeployed from Medicine Hat I told you that *almost* everything looked like being far worse than *ever* in the war, *too* right, my dear even the *Cabinet* have noticed it now, of course I think you're *so* sage not to glance at the papers, because these

days honestly one sees a death sentence in every *column*, every day some child-like Minister discovers there's *no* coal, *no* fat, *no* wheat, *no* rice, and *no* houses likely for *several* years, that's the latest, and *quite* soon it seems it may be *no* films and *no* fags, well of course as I've said we never expected it to be *much* different, in fact Haddock wrote *before* the Election *God* help the men who rule the coming years, *which-ever* party, as you know I *always* think the Christian thing, and one *can't* be unsorry for the wistful Ministers crashing and splashing in the cosmic bog, the only thing is that if there'd been *rather* less cockahoopery about *planning* and everything and a *little* less carbolic yap against the other fellow, the other fellow my dear being half the population, well perhaps the burning tears of compassion *might* flow more cataractically *still*, as it is they're *mainly* devoted to the afflicted British

wife and *matron* whose belt by now is so full of holes it's practically *porous*, and of course the *cardinal* thing is how it all mounts *up*, my dear in the old days with this *mephitic* cold one would merely have crawled into the bottom of a bed and lain there *moribund* with *two* bottles till consciousness returned, whereas now one has to be up and coping if one has the *bubonic* because my dear queues and coupons wait for NO girl and what with stiff-upper-lipping in a bronchitical queue, and searching the snow for *nutrimentary* fragments the cats may bring in from propinquous dust-bins, yes darling that may be the *faintest* atom of exaggeration but *not* more, and if anyone says *Dunkirk* to me again I shall *scream*, *four* times, though of course I do agree that the only *authentic* targets for censure and corrosive talk are the *septic* Germans and the leprous *Japs*, in fact if all else fails and the little upper lip relaxes somewhat I merely mutter *over* and *over* again, "G.D.G." and "G.D.J." which my dear I will *not* interpret in case your Fertility, too sorry, Fidelity sees it, but the *last* letters stand for "the Germans" and "the Japs," do try it darling if you suffer *ever*, you'll find after about *seven* times you see the cosmic mess in *absolute* proportion with warm feelings for H.M. Gov, *always* excepting of course that *phenomenal* blot, my dear you know how I *hate* to say an unkind thing and even now I will *not* use *names*, but my dear if you guess I do think you'll agree that his charm-group is *not* high, in fact there is *something* to be said for the Haddock theory that he is congenitally *unmagnetic*, but that I know is *not* warm-hearted forget *quite* everything I've said.

Haddock my dear I hardly *see* these days, not that with this blinding cold I should always *recognize* him, partly because he's too busy preparing for the *Siege of London* when he says there may be no *Anything*, one hypothesis he harbours is that there may be *edible weeds* in the bed of the Thames, which of course has its plausible aspect, when you *think* of all the organic whatisits, I mean all the vegetational stuff from up the river, the *dead* cats the live gulls and all those millions of revolting little *pink* worms we use for newt-nutrition in the *summer*, anyhow at low tide he digs *doggedly* in the darkest mud, and boils his weeds for *twenty-four* hours though on *what* principle, anyhow the house is *permanently* dank with the *most* discouraging *alluvial* smells, after which we have a *tasting* to see if edible, if not which praises he has always been the verdict so far, the *next* investigation is *is* the weed *smokable*,

which my dear means *protracted* dryings *all* over the kitchen and my *own* oven too inaccessible because of *steaming* water-growths smelling like I can *not* envisage what, my dear too redolent, *not* content with which he does *poisonous* experiments in the old pipe with *ground* bulbs and *dried* carnation leaves, my dear my beloved winter-plants are *quite* naked not to mention the cat who eats them *shamelessly*, then of course there are the *roast* bay-leaves from the neighbour's tree and blotting-paper *boiled* in vinegar and *dried* *slowly* over gas, which Haddock says is perhaps the best, though as I *did* murmur *how* he expects to find enough blotting-paper and vinegar to supply the *nation*, not to mention *gas*, but there it is he says the days are coming when there'll be *quite* no *tobacco* to smoke and *how* degrading if a nation of fumigators is caught without *alternative*, which of course I do *so* see, because H.M. Gov you can bet a billion will open wide their virginal eyes and be taken by *astonishment*, all the same I do wish *some* of the experiments could be done in a Government *wind-tunnel* or somewhere *quite* elsewhere, the *one* ray of hope and solace is that after all these experiments Haddock seems to be developing almost an aversion to the smoking act, I mean after the *bay-leaves* I could *not* induce him to use the *gift-cigar* from my delicious Dane the captain of the *Rota*, who has been over again with *tons* of butter and miscellaneous pig-fruit though not it seems for you and me but the Combined *Food* Board, which means I suppose some unworthy *foreigner*, what a *redundant* nuisance that Continent is well don't you agree, darling, when you think of the *centuries* they've caused us trouble, and if *only* Adam had been an Englishman what *worlds* of worry would have been *quite* eliminated, by the way I've heard not a *word* more about the Canaanite, and so far the King's Proc has made no *positive* move against my *persecuted* Iodine Dale, who still has spasms when the *postman* knocks, altogether darling the turmoil of Peace is by no means abated, I was going to say well anyhow there are no sireens or doodle-bugs only whenever I do say that I dream about them *at* once so I won't, and of course the *sterling* solace is to think *how* often before the *best* people have seen the *end* of everything *just* round the corner, whereas peeping round it I seem to see an endless vista of the largest *hams* with mountains of enchanting *butter*, on which heroic note farewell your tight-lipped little Topsy.

A. P. H.

Home Chat

"HOW did you like them, darling? You preferred the tall one, I expect. Old Jacko. Every-one does. Although funnily enough the other was the better soldier."

"To tell you the truth, darling, I've been wondering why you asked them."

"I wanted them to meet you, darling."

"Well, they did meet me—yes, that's true. Did you want them to talk to me at all?"

"But what a funny girl you are, darling. They talked all the time, didn't they? Jacko never stopped. We all talked, all the evening."

"About each other."

"I'm sorry, darling. I don't get it."

"What I mean is that if you wanted to talk about the war the whole time I don't know why the three of you didn't stay in town and have a few beers together."

"I'd no idea you felt so neglected, darling."

"The short one, Tom Somebody, actually looked at me once and said 'I'm afraid all this must be dreadfully boring for you.' But when I gave him a sort of fatalistic shrug, the only encouragement any man could need to change the subject, he seemed nonplussed."

"He would be. Poor old Tom. That's why he never got promotion. Old Jacko, now—"

"Oh, he didn't even say he supposed it was boring for me. We never got to know one another at all."

"After all, it was you who suggested asking them here. I thought it was something you wanted me to do."

"I wanted them to see Peter. And that's another thing. They were so frightfully late I couldn't keep him up any longer."

"Well, we met in the City, you see. The little one, Tom, did say once or twice oughtn't we to be going, but if you knew old Jacko you'd realize how difficult it would be to get him away."

"Tell me, darling, what did you three talk about when you were all out there together?"

"Home, darling. And you."

"So I understood. Then why is it that when you get home, and they meet me, all you want to talk about is being out there?"

"I wouldn't say we talked about being out there all that much."

"All any of you said was Did the other two remember this or did they remember that. They always did remember, so then you clustered



"Any more for the jolly old 'Garden Suburb'?"

together and all talked at once. You never asked me if I remembered anything."

"You couldn't have, darling. You weren't there, were you?"

"I was here. That is the point. Things happened here too, you know, funnily enough. And it would have been rather nice if once during the evening somebody had said: 'I expect your wife has had some interesting experiences, too. Won't she tell us about some of them?'"

"I suppose they didn't think you would like to, darling."

"I didn't think I would like to, until I found I wasn't asked."

"I'm sorry you feel like that, sweet. While they were washing their hands they both said what a wonderful evening it had been, and such a change too to find themselves really sitting in an English home. And they said how funny it was, knowing me all this time, and to see you at last."

"Funny?"

"Well, the little one, poor old Tom, remarked that you weren't a bit as he imagined."

"What did he imagine, then? You had a photograph of me in your room wherever you went—so you say. You talked about me, apparently. What impression of me did they get to be so far out?"

"I think it was only that you reminded him of somebody else."

"I wonder if men know how women loathe to remind people of somebody else."

"It was probably someone extremely nice."

"No doubt. But a woman likes to feel she has individuality. How can she have if *that's* the only effect she has on people?"

"Well, if it's any comfort to you to know it, old Jacko did not say you reminded him of anyone. He said you were exactly as he had been led to expect."

"A sort of cottage loaf, I suppose,

surrounded by sewing? A woman with too many teeth in her head?"

"Oh, darling . . ."

"If he had imagined me as being extremely attractive, smart or witty and had found I was so, he would have paid more attention to me. Instead he hardly spoke, once I had fed him. And then it was only to say 'Yes, please,' when anyone who understood the rationing would have said 'No, thank you.'"

"Well, darling, if you feel like that, naturally I will not ask them here again."

* * * * *

"Oh, darling, you *are* home nice and early. What do you think has happened? You know that nice man last night, the tall one?"

"Old Jacko?"

"What do you think? The most incredible box of chocolates has arrived from him . . . the biggest I ever set eyes on since long before the war. Where he got it I simply can't imagine. Paris, I suppose. Of course they must be loot, or black market, but however would he get them over here? And he wrote me a perfectly sweet note all about the wonderful dinner I gave them, in spite of having no help in the kitchen, and looking so *soignée* after bending over the stove all day, and the evening they had always looked forward to, he said, was so much better than they ever imagined, and how lucky you were to have me. I cried. And the other one . . ."

"Poor old Tom?"

"He sent me armfuls of flowers. You wouldn't believe how many . . . in a colossal cardboard box, all tissue paper and everything, just like the old days. They must have cost him pounds. I've been absolutely cooing with delight all the afternoon. And the tall one says he is going to get me some stockings, and I am to write and tell him the size."

"Oh, really, darling? I expect they must have thought you felt a bit neglected last night."

"I didn't feel a bit neglected. I was just out of sorts, or something. Besides, if only I had known how very nice they could be I shouldn't have been so huffy. You must have known, darling. I do think it so annoying of you not to say."

o o

Surrealism Corner

"Old views of Carshalton Park House, surrounded by a thick wall two miles long and large park with door roaming about were particularly interesting . . ."

Surrey paper.

At the Play

"MR. BOWLING BUYS A NEWSPAPER"
(EMBASSY)

OCULISTS doubtless have a name for the condition which makes the human eye insensitive to dead human legs sticking out of furniture, and perhaps their files would tell if its incidence is noticeably heavy in the Kensington area. If Mr. DONALD HENDERSON is to be credited, not only oculists but all students of freak behaviour, whether of mind or body, should immediately flock to Kensington and build themselves hides in the corners of the lounges of its smaller hotels.

His not unamusing theme is the case of a man who, tired of life, tries unsuccessfully to commit suicide by a series of blatant murders. It would of course have saved a lot of trouble if Mr. *Bowling*, having smothered his first victim, had called at the Yard with a signed confession; but this would have made things difficult for Mr. HENDERSON, and so poor Mr. *Bowling*, a trifle astray in his head and bent on self-extinction with a modicum of style, is obliged to do in victim after victim in circumstances which grow more and more absurd until whatever tautness the play possessed at the start has vanished.

The public is too well trained in the belief that our policemen are wonderful to accept for one moment the curiously apathetic sleuth who cruises dumbly round the murderer as if plucking up courage to ask him for a fiver. What makes this man's conduct odder is that he has been at school with Mr. *Bowling*, who had there lured him behind the fives courts and carried out some initial experiments in suffocation. He vividly recalls this incident, not without reason, but it takes nearly three acts for its significance to sink in.

Mr. *Bowling* has killed four of his victims in the same hotel, a fact which might have been expected to stir the police to more than passing interest. The evening paper which he goes out to buy towards the end announces that

the coroner has given an open verdict on his latest. The element of doubt which this implies would have cheered him enormously if life had not suddenly found its meaning in the love of a pure and beautiful young woman. My, how good she is! She is so good and pure and modest and unassuming that you feel she has just slid down a sunbeam from the private corner of paradise rented by the Fairchild Family. Having told her all, and been forgiven, Mr. *Bowling* wants to live again, and his chances seem the better for a

accept the smothering, which is intermittent and purely procedural in character, there is nothing in the part to show he is not a young-man of marked charm; and this Mr. ANTHONY HAWTREY makes him. Thus we are constantly uncertain whether to be sorrier for Mr. *Bowling*, his innocent victims, or ourselves. In spite of that Mr. HAWTREY plays him very well, as an engaging and slightly deranged bear. Miss JEAN FORBES-ROBERTSON scores points as a genteel resident (unmurdered), though her part is too long and too facetious, and Miss IRENE HANDL (nearly croaked, but not quite) brightens the party with her special brand of below-stairs fun. ERIC.

"THE MOONRAKER" (Q)

Any story about a Pimpernel starts with a fair wind. This piece, by Mr. ARTHUR WATKYN, continued briskly for a while, to fall away rather in the last act. But it was well mounted and played with spirit.

Lord *Dawlish*, who had helped his king escape, was in hiding for the night in a lonely inn, where he was held in verbal dalliance by the wife of an Ironside colonel while her servant rode to fetch the troops; but the well-known Cavalier charm, of which Mr. WILLIAM FOX gave his lordship plenty, so melted the lady's loyalties, already the more pliable for some good claret, that when the officer who came to make the arrest turned out to be her husband, she blackmailed him to let her prisoner go free. That failing, she succeeded in slipping *Dawlish* a pistol,

and a moment later he was on his way to France.

In spite of a duel and several exciting turns the last act hung fire. It needed some more compelling stratagem than a romantic whim. Mr. FOX fitted his part well and played it with a crisp assurance. Miss DIANA BEAUMONT made a charming Puritan, and Mr. JAMES RAGLAN, Mr. ALEC FINTER, Mr. GABRIEL TOYNE and Mr. FRANKLIN DAVIES gave a good account of themselves.

This enterprising theatre changes its programme each week. ERIC.



EPIDEMIC BREAKS OUT IN SMALL HOTEL.

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Alice | MISS IRENE HANDL |
| Mr. Cooker | MR. CHRISTOPHER STEELE |
| Mr. Bowling | MR. ANTHONY HAWTREY |
| Superintendent Winnik | MR. ANTHONY SHAW |
| Mrs. Fairy Nandle | MISS MARGOT BOYD |
| Miss Niggs Suitar | MISS JEAN FORBES-ROBERTSON |

visit from the detective who, at last emerging from his coma, admits he has nothing on him but declares that next time will be different. But this is the moment chosen by a very old gentleman, one of the few residents remaining unsmothered, to trip down the cellar steps and exhibit symptoms of decease fatally similar to those of Mr. *Bowling's* victims. That seemed to me the truest thing to life in the whole play.

I am told the novel from which it is adapted is more happily contrived. I do not know what it does about Mr. *Bowling's* character. Here, if we



"... she loves you not ..."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

A New New Testament

It is undoubtedly to the credit of the exiled Elizabethan Catholics that they tried to produce an English Bible for their co-religionists. It pre-dated the Authorized Version—the New Testament being printed at Rheims in 1582 and the Old at Douay in 1609. But it was wholly lacking in literary grace; for the translators were far too interested in fidelity to the Vulgate to make efficient use of the mediæval English versions that lie at the back of the Bishops' Bible, or to heed the mediæval translators' warning that too many Latinisms make your English "derk and douteful." Roman Catholic readers have had to put up with a good many "derk and douteful" Latinisms. There is, for instance, the Psalmist whose "eyes have prevented"—meaning forestalled—the morning." But Monsignor RONALD KNOX's homely, dignified and supremely intelligent rendering of *The New Testament* (BURNS, OATES, 6/-) has turned the disability into a triumph. If his fellow Roman Catholics will never hear the magnificent archaisms of the Authorized Version read in their churches, they will at least hear something plainer, simpler, more intimate and more easy to understand. The intimacy comes out conspicuously in the Gospel narratives, and the heightened interest of unaccustomed lucidity in the Epistles. It is a very great feat indeed.

H. P. E.

George Orwell

MR. GEORGE ORWELL is the nearest equivalent to G. K. Chesterton among living critics. Like Chesterton he is not interested in literature either for æsthetic reasons or as a revelation of human nature, but as a clue to the social, political and religious opinions of the age. It was Chesterton's most stimulating quality that he could write with the same gusto about an ode by Milton or a penny dreadful. Everything was significant to him because everything was interrelated. There is much the same spirit in *Critical Essays* (SECKER AND WARBURG, 8/6), and though Mr. ORWELL is harsher than Chesterton, he is by no means devoid of humanity. The two richest and most delightful essays in this volume are on boys' weeklies and on the coloured postcards of fat women in bathing-dresses, etc., which one associates with the seaside but which Mr. ORWELL's investigations have proved to be equally procurable inland. There is a real eloquence in Mr. ORWELL's explanation of these postcards as "a sort of saturnalia, a harmless rebellion against virtue," Sancho Panza's humorous protest against a world where "the rent is always behind and the clothes are always up the spout . . . and the drunken, red-nosed husbands roll home at four in the morning to meet the linen-nightgowned wives who wait for them behind the front door, poker in hand." Equally stimulating is the contrast Mr. ORWELL points between *Raffles* (1900) and *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* (1939), and his analysis of the worlds of P. G. Wodehouse and Salvador Dali.

H. K.

Little Missy

A grannie who was once a Norfolk farmer's frail little daughter—so frail that her home schooling was entirely conducted by her elder sister—is the accomplished author of *The Bulleymung Pit* (FABER, 8/6). And though Miss Lillias Rider Haggard, stressing the manifold allurements of her old neighbour's reminiscences does not mention style, it is precisely for its vigorous narrative and its raucy interpolations of Ham-and-Peggotty dialect that this unpretentious story will be cherished by the discerning. It is an admirable book to show to children. Miss MILDRED ELDRIDGE's illustrations bear out Mrs. MATHENA BLOMEFIELD's text; and one can learn how indispensable a part an intelligent child can play on her father's farm, as Nessel is lured by the twin baits of ownership and responsibility—"my own kitten," "my own puppy," "my own petman pigling," "my own Bessy calf"—to take an increasingly expert and dependable hand in all the operations of the farming calendar. Those were good days. One defies even an importer of Argentine beef to read through the tea on p. 18 without tears. And for the peak of a folk-lore interest that is never far absent, the history of Salla Slapcabbage, and her particularly obnoxious mode of bewitching an intrusive neighbour, may be recommended to amateurs of the occult.

H. P. E.

The World of Gertrude Stein

MISS GERTRUDE STEIN, together with her friend Miss Alice Toklas, and her poodle, Basket, spent most of the war in Occupied France, not far from the Swiss frontier, in the mountain village of Culoz. *Wars I Have Seen* (BATSFORD, 15/-) is the record of her thoughts, feelings and experiences during this period. It is a fascinating book. In other books, written in other times, Miss STEIN's peculiar style has not conciliated all readers, and has induced acute nervous irritation in some. But it seems

perfectly suited to her present theme—for example: "That is the horrible thing about an occupied country, the uneasiness in the eyes of all young men and in the eyes of their fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers, and wives, that uneasiness because at any moment they can be taken away at any moment, their papers can be all in order and yet, and then papers can not be in order and also, and just now our neighbours were telling us of a young man we had known him very well in Belley and later here, and he would go out to the nearest town to buy bread, and his mother said no do not, and he said but mother my papers are in order and he went and he did not come back . . ." It is the style of a child of genius, like Sir Walter Scott's Marjorie Fleming, of whom indeed Miss STEIN is curiously reminiscent in her concrete, detailed and homely sense of life.

H. K.

"According to Plan"

Any who clamoured noisily for the Second Front and still query the necessities for delay will find the answers in *Operation Neptune* (COLLINS, 12/6), by Commander KENNETH EDWARDS, R.N., who, at the suggestion of the late Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, has now given us the story of the Navy's part in "Operation Overlord" (code title for the Allied Invasion of France). More knowledgeable readers will be amazed by the gigantic scope of the plan. Commander EDWARDS, as he explains the huge jig-saw puzzle piece by piece, and shows the difficulty of launching such an expedition from such a small country, having its own life to conduct, tells too of all the smaller and so significant things that were happening under our noses. "There was something about England before the invasion which suggested Shakespeare in modern dress . . . Vessels were built in urban streets and under the greenwood tree . . ." Naval officers were being "made" hurriedly and trained strangely in Scotland. Young men were wallowing in the cold thick mud of the Thames as they learned how to clear harbours. The most dramatic chapter of all describes the last meeting of the Supreme Command at the little village, Southwick, in Hampshire, when the meteorological experts walked in, ships were recalled and the operation delayed for another twenty-four hours. The book, which is excellently written and as good a tribute to ingenuity and co-operation as could be, is lightened by brief tales of heroism and many anecdotes.

B. E. B.

Body from the Sea

A Highland fishing village may seem a peaceful, undramatic place, but not when Mr. NEIL M. GUNN writes about it. He is a quiet, poetic novelist who conveys an inferno of spiritual turmoil by deceptively gentle means. In *The Key of the Chest* (FABER, 8/6) the suspected murder of a shipwrecked sailor precipitates a crisis which shakes the village of Cruime to its roots. The body comes ashore in a storm but is found to have been strangled; and the brothers who report it show signs of unwonted riches. One is a strange boor of a shepherd, the other, the suspected man, a renegade theological student whose old forbidden love for the minister's daughter blazes up afresh to the scandal and concern of all. The tension between these brothers, deeply bound by ties of blood but clashing savagely in temperament, runs through the book like a naked electric wire. Then there is the minister, a dark thwarted man whose love for his daughter has gone underground into queer places, and there is the wild, brilliant young laird who takes a perverse, intellectual delight in the knots in human nature and whose well-wined conversation with his academic guest from the south brings to mind

Norman Douglas. This curious story, is, so to speak, pollinated by the village doctor, moving from group to group on his ancient motor-cycle and bringing with him the benefits of sober judgment. It has an undercurrent of intense excitement and the drama is heightened by the rugged, elemental background. Mr. GUNN describes nature through the eye of an artist, and his novel is altogether a remarkable piece of work.

E. O. D. K.

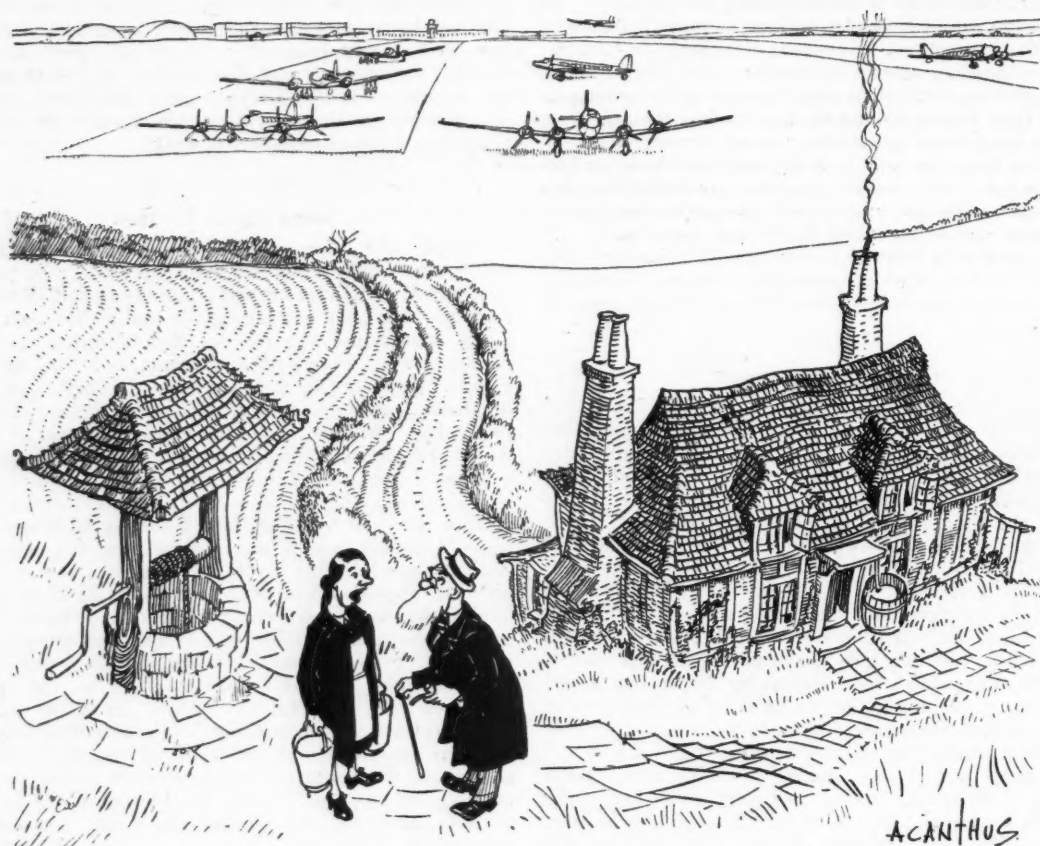
Some Great Escapes

Escape and Liberation 1940-1945 (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 10/6) is divided into two parts. In the first part Mr. A. J. EVANS, himself a famous escaper of the first war, narrates, from accounts given him by the men themselves, some remarkable escapes effected during the second German war. "Pure bluff in this war, as in the last," Mr. EVANS writes, "has paid by far the best 'escaping' dividends," and he gives numerous examples. Two are particularly brilliant in totally different ways. Captain A. D. Taylor, marching through a French village in a column of prisoners, slipped into a chair in an open-air café and was giving an order to a waiter as the rest of the column marched by. Sergeant Nabarro, addressed by a nice old woman in a railway compartment full of German civilians, and knowing hardly any German, rose glaring to his feet, rapped out one of the few words he knew, a very unpleasant one, strode to the door and there, before going out into the corridor, turned upon the compartment, bellowing "Schweinhunde!"—all of which appears to have been accepted by his fellow-travellers as the natural expression of a powerful personality. In the second part of this consistently interesting book the author describes his own experiences at the close of the war, when he assisted in the liberation of some prisoner-of-war camps, both in our zone and in the Russian, of which he gives a lively, amusing and on the whole not unfavourable impression.

H. K.



"My dear chap, the last man we booked was actually EATEN by lions at half the salary you're asking."



"What, no main water?—and only five hours from New York!"

Letter to a Sub-Tenant

DEAR CORKWEEDE,—I was so glad to hear that you had decided to take over my flat for a few months from March. Since you have generously insisted on paying such a high rent for such a small flat I feel I ought to put you "in the picture" on one or two points, so that you won't have to learn the hard way, as I did.

First, about the block generally. It was erected as a money-making machine, nothing more or less, and is simply a collection of concrete boxes. One of the indications of this is the absence of lifts; where lift-shafts might have been there are, instead, more concrete boxes, and my box, as you know, is at the top of where a shaft would have been if there had been one. But a word of comfort: don't be afraid that tradesmen will be abusive

after climbing the seventy-two stairs; by the time they have climbed them they are always speechless.

Now, there is no service of any kind. Make no mistake about that. The tenant pays his rent and takes possession of his box. After that the landlord has finished with him: he is on his own. If your plumbing breaks down, your cooker blows up, or your electric fire suddenly buckles up with a flash and bursts out of the wall, I strongly advise you to do the repairs yourself. If you don't know how to, then there is of course Mrs. Smedley in the basement. You find her by going down as many stairs as possible and following a green-painted sign saying "Commissionaire." She is almost certain to be out, but if she is in she will come to the door with a great number of children (who appear

to subsist exclusively on bread and jam) and will do her best to help. I want to be fair to Mrs. Smedley. She is kindly enough, but has very little time and no technical resources. For water troubles she will recommend you to call on Mr. Wainwright of No. 28, and for gas or electrical troubles, Mr. Polefax of No. 83. They, she will explain, are gentlemen who know about these matters and will be glad to help in return for a packet of cigarettes.

Mr. Wainwright I have never found at home, and Mr. Polefax only once, when I left my electric razor with him early last summer. He seems to have gone away shortly afterwards, although Mrs. Smedley often assures me that she "thought she saw him last week."

One of Mrs. Smedley's functions is

to receive parcels from the postman when the addressees have failed to answer his knock. These parcels, unless C.O.D., are apt to sojourn in the basement for long periods, and it is as well to look in on her now and then and ask if there is anything for you.

One advantage of the top-floor flats is their extreme seclusion. Nobody ever goes up there. . . . But that is not strictly true, as four of them have been broken down since October. I gathered from my last telephone call to the agents that the owners are quite pleased about this; there were eleven burglaries between V E Day and the end of August, so their view is that things are improving. If the door is broken down during your sub-tenancy you will find that the agents will come down on you for the cost of any repairs; I hope you won't mind my holding you responsible for this? I have already paid two bills, each of fifty shillings or so.

I don't know whether you have a car, but if so there are seven garages underneath the building. There were ten, but three were converted into an air-raid shelter, and as this work was not completed until the autumn of last year it is hardly to be expected that the reconversion will be tackled for some time yet. In any case, the garages are not used by the tenants, but by friends of the owners who live elsewhere. This has caused some bad feeling amongst our motorists, I understand, as they have to leave their own cars in the courtyard, from where at least one is stolen every week, while headlamps, seats, batteries and wheels disappear daily.

Incidentally, there is one car in the courtyard which always interests me, and which does not appear to get stolen for some reason. It has all its windows blacked out, and in the back there are always a coil of rope, a large wrench and a coloured silk scarf. I believe I mentioned to you that I had no clue as to the type of people who lived here.

From your windows you will have an excellent view of the Metropolitan and Piccadilly line trains rushing to and fro. If you keep the windows closed you will be able to shut out quite a lot of the noise, and unless you are a very light sleeper you should get a refreshing nap between the last and first trains (1.50 A.M. and 5.25 A.M.). I say "unless you are a very light sleeper," because it is between these hours that the blacked-out car usually seems to warm up and go off.

The train noises are less noticeable during the day. There are other noises to distract your attention—

rag-and-bone men, greengrocery barrows, and Mrs. Smedley's three eldest boys playing football in the street with the lids of the pig-food bins. There are the sounds made by the hot-water system, too—like heavy furniture being dragged over a glass floor.

You will not be very much disturbed by other tenants. The only occasions when they will call upon you are (a) when one of them is doing a flat-to-flat visit looking for somebody who knows how to stop a jet of rust-coloured water shooting out from under his bath, and (b) after burglaries, when it seems a recognized thing for the victims to meet and compare notes on how entry was gained. The police also call on these occasions of course, but they are brief and matter-of-fact. I believe they have a special *pro forma* for investigating burglaries here.

It is possible that you may cause a bit of a stir when you are seen going about the building fully dressed. Most of the tenants wear dressing-gowns permanently, and I often wonder how any of them leave their flats long enough to have them burgled. Don't be alarmed, then, if a thick-set, middle-aged man in a grey bath-robe and a black trilby hat calls on you. It is only Pugson, from the flat below, to tell you that his ceiling is steaming again. I have explained to him that when his ceiling steams it is only because the hot-water pipe has sprung its leak again at the far end of the roof (Mr. Wainwright mended it with plastic

wood in 1942, so Mrs. Smedley tells me), but he comes up every time just the same. Show him that all your floors are dry and he will go away quite satisfied.

You will see from the agreement that you have to clean your own windows, sweep your own corridors, refrain from hanging out washing, and so on. I shouldn't worry too much about these things; nobody else does, and you are not likely to be caught out by the agents, as they haven't been near the place for four years.

Well, I hoped to tell you more about the flat itself, but that must wait, I'm afraid. Mrs. Smedley's youngest girl has just brought me a parcel of apples from my mother, post-marked December 18th, so I must stop and attend to them.

Yours very sincerely,
J. B. B.

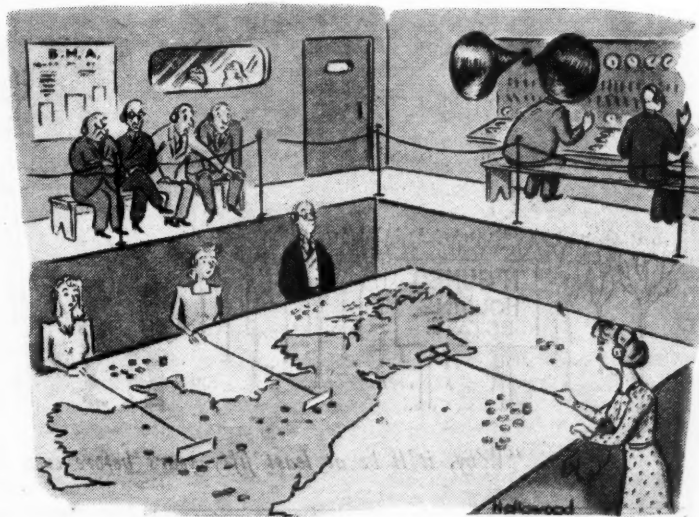
Beans Test

"Members of Congress of both parties showed resentment that the President laid so much of the blame for current difficulties in the way of orderly reconversion upon Congress.

The suggestion was even made by some members of his own party that he should look to the bean of his own eye."

Daily paper.

"Then there are curtesy titles which are not worth as much."—Schoolboy's Essay.
Not more than a bob.



"'One influenza, Nuneaton' amended to 'One scarlet fever, Leeds.' Acknowledge."

Tea-Party

QUITE a lot of people have pointed out how lucky I am that my old friend Symphon has been able to obtain a flat only a few hundred yards from my own; but while it is pleasant to have the opportunity of talking over old times, I sometimes think it would have been better if he had taken a flat a little farther away. Perhaps in Australia or somewhere like that.

One of the more enterprising publishers who happens to be a friend of mine has commissioned me to write a book on "The Evils of Drink," and it by no means assists concentration to have Symphon lounging in at all hours and suggesting that we "pop across the road for a quick one."

Worse still is his perpetual dropping in for meals, and Edith, though the soul of hospitality, took him to task when he came to tea for the fifth successive day.

"Isn't it about time you asked us round to *your* flat for a meal?" she said. Then she added cunningly, "But I suppose the place is so untidy and messy—I know what you bachelors are like—that you daren't ask anybody in?"

This, as she expected, touched Symphon on the raw, as he has a theory that men can housekeep better than women, and he immediately announced that he was giving a small tea-party on the following Wednesday,

and that we would be welcome if we cared to join his other guests.

We saw very little of him in the three days that intervened, though I caught a glimpse of him coming out of the general store with a large tin of silver polish, from which I deduced that he was going to do things in style and use the silver teapot and cream-jug left him by an aunt from whom he had hoped for something better. I also met the man who lived in the flat above him, and he said that Symphon was constantly looking in to borrow such articles as grate-polish, stiff broom, etc., and had even tried to bribe him, when his wife was out, to lend the family vacuum-cleaner. He had refused, but the man on the floor below Symphon was evidently made of less stern stuff, because he (the man on the floor above Symphon) had heard the loud roaring of a vacuum-cleaner in Symphon's flat for nearly an hour, when Symphon evidently tripped over the cable, for a sudden silence was followed by Symphon's voice apologizing to the incensed owner with the remark that he "did not think the damage was serious, and that he would take the thing to pieces himself and put it to rights when he had time."

Edith and I arrived punctually at four o'clock on Wednesday and found the other guests assembled. One was a retired Government official from Malaya who had invented a method

of cooking tinned beef which he said stopped it tasting like tinned beef. The other was a young ex-officer who looked very hungry.

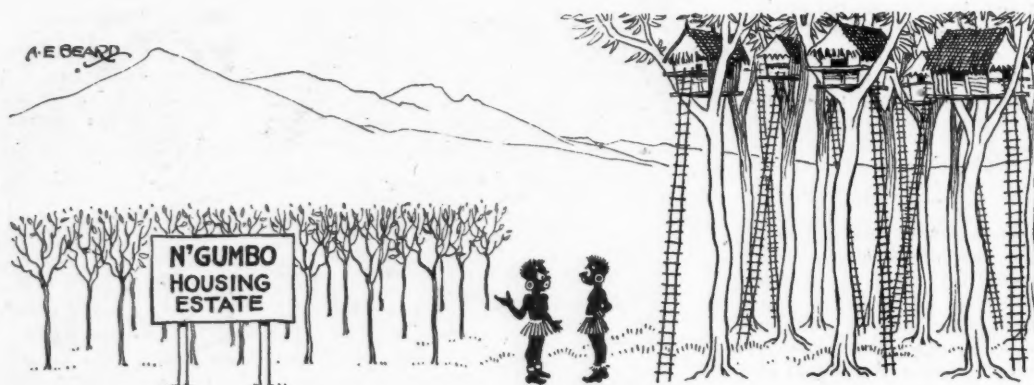
The table was laid for tea, and even Edith was impressed by the extent of the preparations. The silver shone brilliantly, the ash-trays (this amazed me more than anything) contained no ancient piles of cigarette-ends, and the carpet was speckless.

Symphon, however, did not seem at ease. After introducing us to the other guests he gave a weird sort of laugh and said: "Silly idea, isn't it, Early Closing? I mean to say, of course, it isn't a silly idea having Early Closing, but why should it be Wednesday in some towns and Thursday in others? Ridiculous, isn't it?"

The young officer said that he supposed there was a lot in what Symphon said, and it might be a good idea if these Labour johnnies would see about it, instead of nationalizing banks and that sort of nonsense. The Planter said the great thing was to keep a small tin of beef up your sleeve.

"Unfortunately," said Symphon, "I got everything ready before lunch, except the food. I thought if I popped out this afternoon the bread and cakes and things would be fresh, but the confounded shops are all shut."


So Edith and I had to take the party home with us, which makes three more teas Symphon owes.



"Why, it'll be at least fifty years before even the sites are ready."

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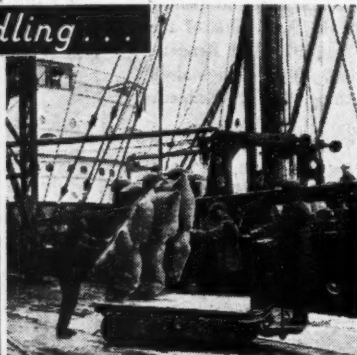
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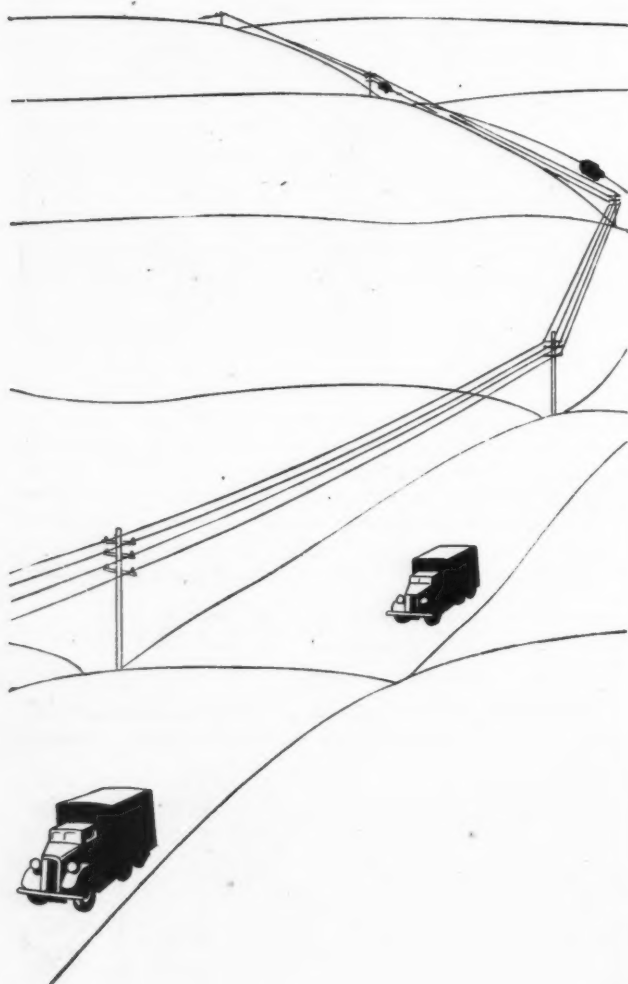
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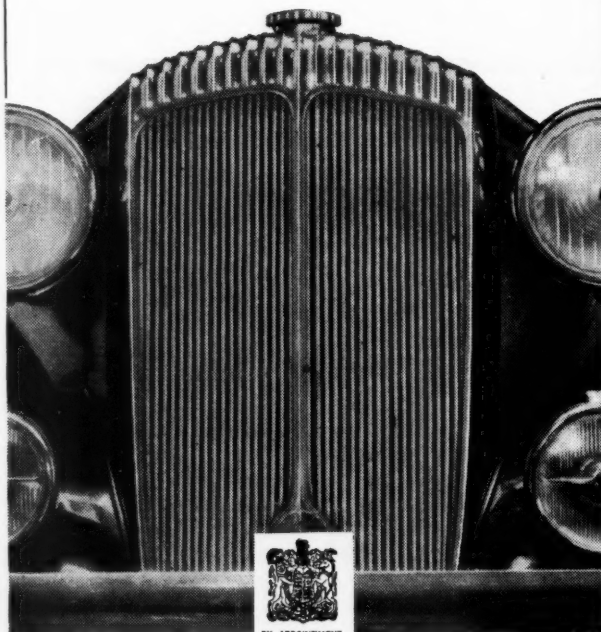
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